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THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL JOURNAL

CONTINUING "THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER"

APRIL 1915

EDUCATIONAL NEWS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT

The meeting of the Department of Superintendence at Cincinnati during the last week of February was one of the most notable educational gatherings that has ever come together in this country. The attendance was larger by five hundred than ever before. It became apparent in the resolutions passed by the Department that a certain degree of independence will be sought for this meeting. It was resolved that hereafter only those should vote at the meetings of the Department who are directly concerned with the type of work that is represented by this meeting. This resolution has to be submitted to the general Association, but will undoubtedly act to give the Department a type of independence which it deserves.

The interests of school organization were also represented in certain of the other resolutions. It was voted that the differentiation of the school curriculum beginning with the seventh grade is desirable throughout our public schools. This is an indication of the growing tendency in all parts of the country to develop a junior high school.

A resolution was also adopted creating a committee to provide for some type of organization which shall carry the influence of the Association through the year between the meetings of the Department. If an organization can be effected which will promote the professional interests of superintendents and teachers, it undoubtedly will be a very large

service. The general Association has never been compact enough to take in hand the serious problems of professional organization. The Department of Superintendence has reached the point in its history where it could become a very useful agency to this end.

Passing over the other resolutions which are important in themselves, but not characteristic of the particular meeting of this

**Standards
and Tests** year, we may comment on several programs which were significant in determining the history of certain movements. The National Council evidently had planned during this meeting to give a full hearing to those who are skeptical about the desirability of standardization, tests, measurements, and other exact forms of evaluating school work. The first program of the National Council bore as its general title, "Standardization, Wise and Otherwise." Mr. Winship, President Pearce, Superintendent Nathan S. Schaeffer, and Professor Bird T. Baldwin appeared on the program. A telegram was read from Mr. John R. Kirk, president of the State Normal School at Kirksville, Missouri. The first three speakers on the program called attention to the fact that standardization has been going forward very rapidly through various agencies. A number of times outspoken criticism was expressed against the activities of some of the great educational foundations, but, beyond this criticism, the effort to show that there is harm or danger in standardization did not get very far.

Mr. Winship was very clear in his mind that different localities must be satisfied with different kinds of institutions. For some reason or other he seemed to believe that standardization was going to destroy the autonomy of different communities. Why standardization should be regarded as inimical to variation is difficult to see. If a community wants to have an institution like Valparaiso as distinguished from another institution like Yale or Harvard, these being the institutions to which Mr. Winship most frequently referred, then certainly the community ought to be allowed to do what it likes. Standardization simply means that the community will know what it is doing; if it wants to have these variations it will hardly be doubted that the choice ought to be made intelligently rather than by mere accident. There are some people who

are likely to be misled by an institution that is not equally good with other institutions without knowing that the character of institutions differs as widely as it does. Consequently Mr. Winship's argument that various institutions ought to be different from each other is in nowise unacceptable to the most ardent advocate of standards.

Mr. Pearse followed the same general line, arguing that there is no possibility of standardizing families. This analogy represents perhaps the strongest point in his argument, but here again it ought to be pointed out that families will undoubtedly be interested, if they are at all scientifically minded, in comparing themselves with each other. A standard does not necessarily mean a final rule of action, nor does it demand that everyone shall conform absolutely to the principles set down by any single institution or family. Mr. Schaeffer called attention to the very encouraging fact that all of the professions are making use of educational institutions as a basis for their standardization. While the requirement of a high-school education as the basis of all professional courses may be called in question as a general policy, it is nevertheless an accomplished fact.

Mr. Baldwin pointed out some of the efforts which have recently been made in standardization. Mr. Kirk's telegram indicated that he has very little sympathy with the survey which is being made at the present time of the normal schools of the state of Missouri by the Carnegie Foundation.

No one attended the program under discussion without feeling that the attack upon standardization, if such was intended, was a complete failure. In the first place, those who attacked standardization apparently did not understand what is meant by standardization; and the evidences that appeared that standardization is going forward and is an important part of our American educational and social scheme were very strong.

Another general program which dealt with the same type of topic was the program of Friday morning of the Department of Superintendence. The title of this program was "The Investigation of the Efficiency of Schools and School Systems." It had been reported widely that the whole matter of surveys would here be handled without any

**Discussion of
Surveys**

reserve whatsoever, and so it was. Superintendent Van Sickle read a very impressive paper giving an account of the development of the movement for school surveys and reported with a good deal of detail the judgment of those who have been in contact with these surveys as to the profitable results for the school systems that have been surveyed. His verdict was unqualified that the result has been useful in American education.

Mr. Ayres of the Russell Sage Foundation followed with a very notable paper in which he gave an account of the development of the whole movement for social surveys. He indicated that the school surveys are part of the general scientific attitude which is being assumed by communities at the present time. Mr. Ayres also gave a number of characteristics of a good survey. The survey must be made by competent people; it must not be partisan in its character; it must be co-operative in its character, including the activities of the superintendents and principals; it must have public character; its results must be made available for the people in the school system. All of these maxims for the organization of a survey indicate that the movement has passed beyond the experimental stage and is coming to be recognized as a movement with definite public character.

Superintendent Young of Chicago followed with a plea for the internal organization of school surveys. She referred to the undertakings of the school officers of the city of Chicago and called attention to the value of a survey made by the officers themselves. She pointed out the difficulties that arise from the common attitude of over-criticism of what is found in the schools. Anyone who expected an attack upon the survey movement from this quarter was disappointed. To be sure, Superintendent Young did point out that there are many agencies now making surveys in the country that are unworthy. She included among those of whom she was skeptical the college officers who have been engaged in work of this type, but in the main her verdict was in favor of a rational, internal self-examination.

Commissioner Kendall followed with an elaborate discussion of the different kinds of surveys that ought to be developed. He also called attention to the dangers that arise from basing these

surveys on mere opinion. There should be experienced, practical officers of school systems connected with every survey. Commissioner Kendall's discussion of the matter was very wholesome and encouraging to those who wish to see the survey movement promoted along rational lines. There was also in his statement a strong emphasis upon the desirability of continuity in the work.

The final number of this program was presented by Superintendent Maxwell. Superintendent Maxwell felt very sure that the surveys in the form in which they are now organized are open to many criticisms. He made the charge that the surveys were the result of the efforts on the part of college officers to secure employment, evidently assuming that college officers have very little else to do than to look for some perquisites in the way of opportunities to work outside their own field. Mr. Ayres's answer to this in the earlier paper was so complete that it is hardly worth discussing this particular point. The survey movement is a movement which grows out of the large social interest in public affairs. After Mr. Maxwell had disposed of those whom he criticizes for having organized surveys, he found the movement closely related to the historical fact that there has in recent years been a reaction against examinations. Mr. Maxwell regards scientific testing as merely a new form of examination. He thinks that this new form of examination will have its day and will ultimately be superseded by something better. He did not indicate what something better would be, but he did point out the very hopeful outlook of this present movement as the probable basis of that which is to come in later years.

Commenting on the whole problem from the point of view of the partisan of standards and measurements and surveys, it must be said that nothing but encouragement could be derived from the words which were spoken. If there are agencies which have been carrying on surveys in a fashion unworthy of the science of education, they ought to be suppressed and everyone will welcome criticism of such agencies and their modes of operation. On the other hand, there can be no doubt at all that the time has passed when surveys are open to general skepticism and the time has certainly passed when standards and measures will be looked upon as of doubtful value. The actual

**The Survey
Movement
Established**

adjustment of the school situation will still involve complexities that we have not solved, but that the time has passed when one can scoff at standards and surveys was very apparent from the whole tone of the Cincinnati meeting.

It would hardly be fair to close the discussion without calling attention in a general way to the fact that in many of the meetings details were brought forward showing how economy can be effected, showing how reading and arithmetic and history and geography need to be reorganized, showing how in all of these fields there are vigorous activities going on in the schools through the agencies both of superintendents and of special students.

One very notable feature of the meeting was the organization of a National Society of Efficiency Men. Already there are nine school systems in the United States that have employed in connection with the office of superintendent men whose special business it is to measure the effects of school work and to give the superintendent the advantage of a scientific inquiry into the operation of the schools. That these men should organize and begin to promote the movement which they represent, each in his own city, is a historical event in the development of American education. There will be a meeting of these men next year at Detroit, where the Department of Superintendence is to come together, and we may soon look for a stream of publication from this source which will be of very great advantage to the educational world.

One other comment may be added. The Committee for Determining Standards and Tests recommended that the work go forward, and this was voted by the National Council without a dissenting vote. The *Elementary School Journal* will attempt throughout the year to collect and publish material on reading, as it has during the past year. It solicits from its readers material of this type and will be very glad indeed to put anyone who is attempting to carry on tests in communication with others who are engaged in similar work, and it will so far as possible supply material to anyone who is undertaking tests of this kind.

The past few years have witnessed a widespread movement among the larger cities toward the introduction of medical inspection in some form into the public-school system. The experience of those cities in which medical inspection has been attempted in a systematic way indicates that the school in adding this to its list of functions is rendering a social service of the highest order. A few facts from Boston are of interest in this connection.

In 1907 the Division of Hygiene in the Boston School Department began the systematic testing of the eyesight of the children of the public schools. In that year it was discovered that 31.5 per cent of the 83,909 pupils examined were defective. "By continued testing, by following all cases into the homes, by prescribing glasses and remedial treatment, and by assisting indigent children to obtain glasses at a nominal cost, the Division has greatly reduced the number and the percentage of ocular trouble." An examination of 91,326 children, completed in January of this year, shows that 5,754 children are now wearing glasses, and 11,039, or 12.08 per cent of the total, have abnormal vision. Thus it is seen that careful inspection for eight years has resulted in the reduction of the percentage of defectives from 31.5 per cent to 12.08 per cent. These results most certainly point to a wise expenditure of public funds when we consider the relation of visual defect to retardation with its attendant social and economic evils.

Those in control of public education in this country are frequently guilty of practicing a false economy; and probably in no instance is this tendency more pronounced than in the burdening of the superintendent with numerous clerical duties. Of course the members of school boards may be excused on the grounds that they are human and are merely exhibiting a perfectly natural human weakness. And possibly they are, so long as their attention is not directed toward the facts. Consequently, in order that this excuse may not long be a valid one, it might be profitable to give currency to a summary of the conclusions reached at a recent gathering of school-board

**The Value of
Medical
Inspection**

**The Need for
Clerical
Assistance**

members and superintendents from the parishes (counties) of Louisiana. A statement of these conclusions follows:

No business will succeed unless it is properly managed and supervised, and this is as true of the school business as of any other business. Even thoroughly competent teachers need the constant advice and co-operation of a wise superintendent; many of our teachers, however, are young and inexperienced, and they, especially, should receive constantly the help of the superintendent. In order that the superintendent may keep in close touch with the people of the various communities, and especially with all of his teachers, he should be able to visit each of the schools at least once or twice a month, and to spend sufficient time in each school to enable him to be of real service to the teachers in organizing and directing the work.

The school board cannot afford to pay the salary required to secure the services of a competent superintendent for clerical work in the office. The bookkeeping, compiling reports, typewriting, writing warrants, etc., should be done by a cheaper employee than the parish (county) superintendent, especially in parishes that employ a large number of teachers. It was the opinion of the conference that clerical help should be given the parish superintendent in order that the superintendent may spend his time in his schools directing the efforts of teachers and stimulating educational activity among the patrons.

Boys and girls in New York City, between fourteen and sixteen years of age, who have secured working papers and have left school to go to work, but have failed to obtain employment or have lost their jobs after working for a time, are **An Experiment for the "Wasted Years," Fourteen to Sixteen** to receive special opportunities to continue their schooling. A small beginning has already been made by establishing in one public elementary school a "practical information class" designated as 7A-8B special, the teacher furnishing such instruction as seems to meet the special needs of the pupils. Since the class is intended for pupils temporarily out of employment, the number in attendance fluctuates greatly. Class sessions are five hours a day, but pupils may be excused for as many as three hours, when necessary, to seek employment.

The experiment is an attempt to reduce the deterioration which results during these years from the shifting about from one juvenile occupation to another with intermittent idleness for weeks at a time. Somewhat similar provisions are made for the

work-permit children in Wisconsin in the all-day industrial school established as a part of the state system of industrial education.

The problem of securing for every child "a place to play" is a very serious one in large cities such as New York and Chicago.

Play Space for Children In Chicago, for instance, there are 334 regular school buildings, 43 branches, 19 schools occupying rented quarters, and 261 of the so-called portable buildings.

In scores of cases playgrounds are either entirely lacking or inadequate. The deficiency is partly met by the establishment of small parks and special playgrounds, but it is found too expensive to provide a playground for every neighborhood.

The remedy which is being very successfully used in both Chicago and New York is a very simple one and costs but little money. In the crowded districts and near schools having no playground, a block or two of the street is roped off for certain hours of the day providing a safe convenient play space for the children. At other times the street can be used for regular traffic, and no one is seriously inconvenienced.

A junior high school has recently been inaugurated in the little town of McMinnville, Oregon. The establishment of this institution has attracted much attention inasmuch as this
A Junior High School is the first time that a junior high school has been organized in one of the smaller American towns.

The newly organized institution is described by Superintendent W. R. Rutherford in a recent bulletin entitled *Feasibility of the Junior High School in the Small City*.

The sum of thirty thousand dollars was appropriated for the erection of the building, which is located near enough to the regular high school to permit the regular high-school teachers to come to the building or to receive classes from it in their own classrooms at the high school.

The course of study differs but little, as yet, from the regular work of the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades except in the electives offered. These include music and art, German, typewriting, shorthand, printing, ancient history, and household accounting.

In connection with the present discussion in New York City regarding legislation to reduce the size of the board of education from 46 to 9 members, the question has arisen whether the members should receive compensation in case the small board of 9 members is authorized. The following facts showing the present practice of cities of 100,000 population and over, with reference to the compensation of members of boards of education, have been gathered by the Public Education Association of New York City and published in a recent bulletin:

COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS OF BOARDS OF EDUCATION IN CITIES
OF 100,000 POPULATION AND OVER*

Compensation	Number of Cities	Names of Cities
No compensation.....	42	Albany, Atlanta, Baltimore, Birmingham, Boston, Bridgeport, Cambridge, Chicago, Cincinnati,** Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Denver, Detroit, Fall River, Grand Rapids, Indianapolis, Jersey City, Kansas City, Louisville, Lowell, Minneapolis, Nashville, Newark, New Haven, New Orleans, New York, Omaha, Paterson, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Portland, Providence, Richmond, St. Louis, Scranton, Seattle, Spokane, Syracuse, Toledo, Washington, Worcester.
Compensation.....	6	
\$3000 per annum.....		San Francisco
\$1200 per annum.....		Rochester
\$ 40 per month.....		Memphis
\$ 10 per meeting, not to exceed \$50 per month.....		Los Angeles
\$ 10 per meeting, not to exceed \$40 per month.....		Oakland
\$ 3 per meeting, not to exceed \$100 per annum.....		Milwaukee
Total.....	48	

* Only 48 of the 50 cities which had 100,000 population and over, according to the Federal Census of 1910, are included in this table, as 2 cities, Buffalo and St. Paul have no boards of education.

** Entitled to 5 cents per annum for each pupil enrolled, but none have collected the amount allowed them.

COMPENSATION OF BOARDS OF DIFFERENT SIZES IN CITIES OF
100,000 POPULATION AND OVER

SIZE OF BOARD	NUMBER OF CITIES	NO COMPENSATION		COMPENSATION	
		Num- ber	Cities	Num- ber	Cities
3	1	1	Albany		
4	1			1	San Francisco
5	14	12	Birmingham, Boston, Cambridge, Denver, Indianapolis, Louisville, Lowell, New Orleans, Portland, Seattle, Spokane, Toledo	2	Memphis, Rochester
6	1	1	Kansas City		
7	8	6	Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Minne- apolis, New Haven, Syracuse	2	Los Angeles, Oakland
9	10	10	Baltimore, Fall River, Grand Rapids, Jersey City, Nashville, Newark, Pater- son, Richmond, Scranton, Washington		
12	4	4	Atlanta, Bridgeport, Omaha, St. Louis		
14	1	1	Dayton		
15	3	2	Philadelphia, Pittsburgh	1	Milwaukee
18	1	1	Detroit		
21	1	1	Chicago		
30	1	1	Worcester		
33	1	1	Providence		
40	1	1	New York		
Total	48	42		6	